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New Buffalo Times

NEWS
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Thursday, February 1, 2024

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COOL SPIRIT...
BISON CELEBRATE WINTERFEST 2024
— PAGES 10-11 —

PHOTO OF BISON BOYS FACING OFF AGAINST THE COVERT BULLDOGS AT FRIDAY'S GAME BY FRANCESCA SAGALA



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New Buffalo Times

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Gov. Whitmer, Rep. Andrews announce MSHDA home repair program open to southwest Michigan residents

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, state Rep. Joey Andrews and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) announced a \$300,000 grant to the Berrien County Land Bank for energy-efficiency home repairs and upgrades to eligible homeowners Thursday, Jan. 25.

According to a press release, this award aligns with the governor's new MI Healthy Climate Plan recommendation to upgrade homes to help lower energy costs, as well as with the Southwest Housing Partnership's goal of increasing funding in the region by 10% for rehabilitation and preservation of existing housing stock.

"Every Michigander deserves a safe, affordable place to call home," said Gov. Whitmer. "Today's MI-HOPE grant will help Michiganders in Berrien County make much-needed home

improvements, lower their utility bills, and make their homes more comfortable and efficient. Last night, in my State of the State address, I announced our plan to build or rehabilitate 10,000 homes, expanding the supply of housing to lower costs and create thousands of good-paying jobs. Together, we will 'build, baby, build' more housing, lower costs for homeowners, and ensure everyone can make it in Michigan."

"Making homes more affordable and more energy efficient are two of the ways we're lowering costs for Michiganders," said state Rep. Joey Andrews (D-St. Joseph). "I'm proud to help announce this grant, and I want to thank not only Gov. Whitmer for her commitment to affordable housing, but also to the Berrien County Land Bank for its role in bringing these critical improvements to fruition."

Around half of Michigan

homes were built before 1970, and too many families spend more than half their income on rent or mortgage. Through this grant and other programs, MSHDA is dedicated to bringing down the cost of housing for Michigan families, no matter where they live or whether they rent or buy.

The Michigan Housing Opportunities Promoting Energy-efficiency (MI-HOPE) program from MSHDA provides grants that allow homeowners to make repairs and upgrades that enhance energy efficiency and meet specific health and safety guidelines. Eligible activities include roof repair or replacement, insulation, modification or replacement of heating/cooling systems and more.

"We are moving quickly with solutions like MI-HOPE, which helps homeowners repair and upgrade older homes to make them more

efficient, saving them money," said MSHDA Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Amy Hovey. "But we can't do it alone. We're grateful to the Berrien County Land Bank for distributing these grant funds to local homeowners for their new windows, doors, insulation, and more."

"Last night, I was honored to join the Governor's State of the State address, and one thing she said that really stuck out to our city were her three B's on housing: Build, Baby, Build," said Benton Harbor Mayor Marcus Muhammad. "Her vision aligns with our plan to attract 10,000 new residents to Benton Harbor by 2040. With developments like today's and several different housing opportunities, Benton Harbor will be a place where people come from all over to call home."

Visit MSHDA's website for a list of contacts in your area and more program details.

— STAFF REPORTS

One of the worst harms you can do your soul is to be irritated and complain. — Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR

CITY COUNCIL

MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI,
JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN,
VANCE PRICE

City Council meets on the 3rd Monday
of each month at 6:30PM

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS

Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month
at 5:30PM

NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD

PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT,
JUDY H. ZABICKI, PATTY IAZZETTO,
JACK ROGERS

Board meets on the 3rd Monday
of each month at 4PM

NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meets on the 1st Tuesday
of each month at 6:30PM

SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY

Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders

NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY

Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday
of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo
Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway
New Buffalo

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LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS,
DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER,
VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY,
GREG VOSBERG

CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP

CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD

DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK,
LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN,
BILL MARSKE

Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd
Thursday of each month at 6:30PM

CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meets on the 1st Wednesday
of each month at 6:30PM

THREE OAKS

THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD

Meets on the 2nd Monday
of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday
of each month at 7PM

GRAND BEACH

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday
of each month at 7PM

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HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN,
JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR,
EDWARD BRANDES

MICHIANA

VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL

Meets on the 2nd Friday
of each month at 1PM

Berrien County Health Department launches underage vaping campaign

The Berrien County Health Department's substance use disorder prevention team is raising awareness of the dangers associated with underage vaping.

The Health Department's vaping prevention campaign seeks to educate community members younger than 21 about the negative health effects associated with underage vaping of electronic vapor products, such as e-cigarettes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2021 1 in 3 Michigan high school students reported they had tried an electronic vapor product in their lifetime with 14% reporting their use in the past month. The 2021-2022 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth found more than 1 in 7 Berrien County teens had used an e-cigarette in the past month.

Electronic vapor devices heat a liquid and produce an aerosol or mix of small particles in the air. Many are composed of a battery, a heating element and a place to hold liquid. They come in a variety of sizes and may be shaped like everyday items, such as pens or highlighters.

Some of the negative side effects already known include:

- Increased likelihood of nicotine addiction.
- Effects on memory, mood and attention.
- Increased risk of lung disease

- and worsened symptoms for lung conditions such as asthma.
- Increased risk of cancer, high blood pressure and heart attack.
- Greater levels of anxiety and depression.
- Risk of severe burns and injury from device malfunction.

“Marketed using bright colors and popular flavors, these harmful

electronic vapor products are targeted toward young people, who may be unaware of the health risks associated with nicotine or the vapor itself,” said Lisa Peeples-Hurst, public health promotion and prevention supervisor. “It’s critical we as a community have these conversations with our children about the dangers of vaping and how to form healthy lifestyle habits.”

Parents and caregivers seeking to reduce their child’s risk of underage substance misuse can begin having conversations using these resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

For more information about preventing underage vaping and tobacco use, visit www.escapethevape.com, or contact Lisa Peeples-Hurst at lpeepleshurst@bchdmi.org or 269-927-5690.

— STAFF REPORTS

THREE OAKS LIBRARY LAUNCHES 2024 READING CHALLENGE

Join the Three Oaks Township Public Library in completing its 2024 Annual Reading Challenge.

Forms are available at the checkout desk to keep track of what you read. After you finish 12 of the 15 choices, you can be entered into the grand prize drawing. The Challenge ends Dec. 31, 2024.

The library now has a large paper shredder to shred your sensitive documents. No appointment is necessary. The machine is very easy to use and it will shred up to 12 pages at once, including staples. It also shreds credit cards and CDs. You may take your shreds with you or the library can recycle or dispose of them for you.

Story Time for all ages at Three Oaks Township Public Library is from 10:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays and from 4:30-5 p.m. Thursdays.

Drop-In Play Doh Play Date is from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesdays. Drop in to squish, shape and roll with the library’s Play Doh and supplies. Parents must accompany young children.

Knitting & Crocheting Circle is from 10:30-11 a.m. Wednesdays. Individuals of all skill levels are invited to bring any needlework and enjoy a cup of coffee while visiting with others.

Lego Club @ the Library is all day Thursdays. Drop in for a few minutes or stay all day to build and create with the library’s hundreds of Legos. All creations will be left up for one week.

Adult Drop-In Color Me Happy Hour is from 1-2 p.m. Thursdays. Coffee, coloring sheets and colored pencils will be provided for this adult only social time.

Take & Make bags for children are available on a first come, first served, basis.

The coffee pot is always and free of charge compliments of the Three Oaks Library Friends. — STAFF REPORTS

*The Athenians govern the Greeks;
I govern the Athenians; you, my wife,
govern me; your son governs you.
— Themistocles*

Limited fire damage at Kingsbury Elevator

BY STAN MADDUX

A building used for storing farm chemicals and other products worked as designed to limit fire damage at Kingsbury Elevator Monday, Jan. 29

A police officer noticing the fire while on patrol also kept damage to a minimum.

According to La Porte County Police, Deputy Scott Lanoue about 9:30 p.m. was northbound on U.S. 35 when he observed what appeared to be a fire at the elevator.

Police said he drove onto the property and found a small fire coming from a storage cabinet attached to the inside of the roughly 100-by-40-foot pole barn.

The officer then contacted a 911 dispatcher, who notified firefighters.

La Porte County Police officer Jonathon Sikorski also responded to assist and used a fire extinguisher from his patrol vehicle to try and reach the flames inside the cabinet.

He was unable to get close enough with his extinguisher, though, to put out the flames.

A short time later, police said responding volunteer firefighters from Kingsbury, Kingsford-Union and Scipio Township forced their way inside through a main door at a different location of the building.

They wound up cutting into the metal exterior of the structure to reach and extinguish the fire, police said.

La Porte County Hazmat Director Jeff Hamilton said the structure contained multiple 330 gallon containers of diesel exhaust fluid along with insecticides, herbicides, pesticides and some fertilizer.

Hamilton said diesel exhaust fluid on pieces of heavy machinery like semi-trucks are kept in separate tank on the vehicles.

It's automatically injected into the emissions so the exhaust burns hotter and comes out cleaner.

Hamilton said the liquid never posed a danger, though, because it's made of two-thirds water and one-third urea, a mineral that serves as the flammable ingredient in the fluid.

He said the fluid along with the petroleum based farm chemicals could have ignited had the structure fire burned hot enough but the flames were too small to generate such heat and at low risk of spreading much.

Hamilton said the risk of a major advancing fire was kept down from the structure being all metal except for the wooden support beams on the inside of the building.

"With hardly any wood on the inside of the building because of it being a basic pole barn the chances of that happening would have been very slim," he said.

Hamilton also noted there was never any threat for an explosion because of how difficult it was for the fire to spread and the stored chemicals not being highly combustible.

No light was shed on the cause of the fire.

According to police, an independent contractor recently hired was completing some electrical work on the building and placing new receptacles on the inside to store diesel exhaust fluid.

Charges filed in robberies of liquor store customers

BY STAN MADDUX

A man is accused of robbing and briefly kidnapping two female customers of a liquor store on separate days in Michigan City.

Anthony Rivers, 47, is charged in La Porte Superior 1 with two counts of robbery and two counts of kidnapping, all Level 3 felonies, along with five other counts.

Police said both incidents happened in December about two weeks apart outside King Richards Liquors in the 3300 block of Franklin Street.

Both women came out of the store after making purchases and climbed behind the wheel of their vehicles just before Rivers allegedly sat down in their front passenger seats.

At gunpoint, police said he emptied the purse of the first victim and took \$15 in cash.

He also wanted her to drive him to an ATM but all she had was a food stamp card.

Police said she then complied with his order to drive him to a location a short distance away where he stepped out of

the vehicle and fled.

According to court documents, the second victim as ordered drove to an ATM then showed him her bank account to prove she had no money to withdraw from the machine.

Police said Rivers wearing a ski mask wound up taking the woman's purse along with her rings, necklace and the earrings she had on.

Neither one of the victims was physically harmed, police said.

Court documents also revealed surveillance camera images of Rivers bearing a close description to the suspects in each robbery helped result in his arrest.

Vehicle registration data compiled by license plate reading flock cameras narrowed down his location to a residence in the 1400 block of Tennessee St. where a car linked to Rivers was found, police said.

In 2005, police said Rivers was arrested and later convicted of robbing two U.S. immigration agents in Calumet City, Illinois.

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Presentations, park visits to promote environmental importance of vernal pools

Amy Gillan, Berrien County coordinator for the Michigan Vernal Pool Patrol, and Pat Fisher, president of the Harbor Country Hikers, are offering a series of educational programs

about vernal pools at various locations around Berrien County from February through late April.

Vernal pools are seasonal bodies of water that serve as predator-free breeding grounds for amphibians, insects and other small creatures.

According to Fisher, the animals that mature there play critical roles in local environments and promote regional biodiversity. Many of the pools are unprotected and therefore threatened, thanks mostly to ignorance of the role they play, Fisher said.

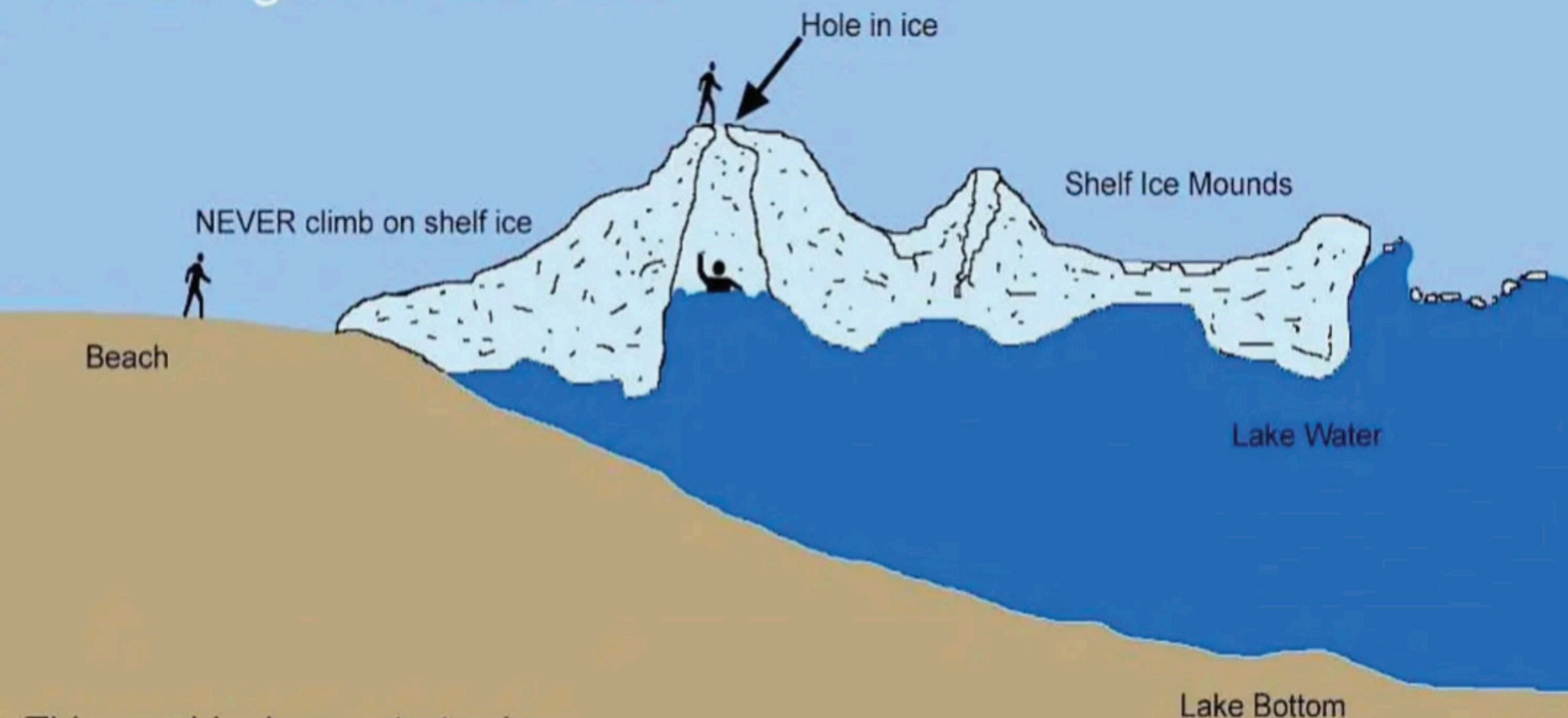
The programs will begin with a presentation at the New Buffalo Township Library at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6. A second presentation, also at the New Buffalo Library at 6 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 26, will be aimed primarily at young people. The presentation will move to Fernwood Botanical Garden in Niles at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 2, and Saturday, April 6, it will move to Love Creek County Park in Berrien Center, also at 1 p.m.

Two hands-on “vernal pool monitoring” sessions are scheduled for the New Buffalo Area Schools Nature Study Trails at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 23, and for Love Creek at 2:30 p.m. April 6 following the 1 p.m. presentation.

— STAFF REPORTS

The Dangers of Shelf Ice



This graphic demonstrates how a hidden hole in shelf ice mounds can lead to the icy waters of the lake beneath, with little chance of climbing out.

Graphic by Tom Gill

SPORTS

From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

I watched Saturday Night Live and enjoyed the opening that had a bunch of “real men” lamenting the fact that “real football” was coming to an end this weekend.

When someone challenged them by bringing up the Super Bowl, the guys said that was a show about commercials and food and people that didn’t know or care about football were the ones that liked it most.

While I admit that I enjoy all of the extra-curricular activities, I also enjoy the game itself. They also joked about not having anything to talk about when the season ends, and while there is a grain of truth to that, we do have a baseball season—and a pretty important election coming up this year.

As for the big game, Kansas City is in again. Usually I don’t like dynasties (unless they’re in Chicago), but Kansas City is fun to watch and I like their players, coaches, and fans. KC will be opposed by San Francisco and the game should be close and exciting.

The Chiefs beat the Ravens rather handily, even though the score was close while in the second game. Detroit jumped out to a 24-7 halftime lead. San Francisco came back to dominate the second half and with some great plays and some lucky bounces, ended up beating the Lions 34-31, putting an end to Detroit’s Cinderella season.

The playoffs have taught me one thing.

The Bears are going to be a good football team next year, but they better improve a lot if they want to compete with the Lions, Packers, and even the Vikings.

They have a lot of really big decisions to make this off-season.

They started by hiring offensive and defensive coordinators who are respected and experienced.

The biggest decision they have to make is whether to draft a new quarterback, or stay with Justin Fields.

Four possible outcomes are possible.

If one of the quarterbacks is a franchise quarterback, and the Bears pick the wrong one, it’s going to take years to recover.

If the Bears choose the right one, a championship could be on the horizon. The other outcomes are both being franchise players or neither of them being special.

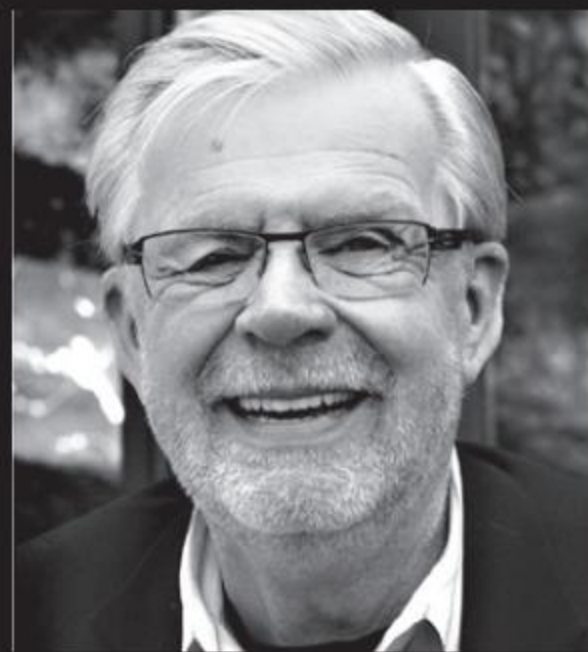
I really like Justin Fields, and I think he has the ability to be great either with the Bears or wherever they trade him. Ryan Poles, the Bears general manager, has made a lot of excellent decisions and hopefully he will get this one right too.

So, as the football season draws to a close, pitchers and catchers will begin reporting for spring training in a couple of weeks.

There are still a few outstanding free agents available that could change the fortunes of your favorite team, and so far every team is undefeated, so this is the time of year for optimism. I actually heard that the sun might shine tomorrow, which may brighten everyone’s outlook.

John Guare said, “It’s amazing how a little tomorrow can make up for a whole lot of yesterday.”

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.



Public Notice: Your right to know!

PUBLIC NOTICES are an effective way for agencies of government to make official announcements.

State law requires these notices be printed in newspapers.

Nearly two-thirds of active Michigan voters* would be concerned if government placed these notices on websites because important information could be concealed from the public.

* EPIC-MRA 2011



This newspaper supports your right to know.

Respond intelligently even to unintelligent treatment. — Lao Tzu



Bison boys celebrate victory against Buchanan

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team has won six of its last seven games.

The latest victory came Tuesday, Jan. 30, at home against Buchanan in what was a fast paced, defensive battle.

The score was 38 to 33.

New Buffalo Head Coach Nate Tripp said the team is playing as well as he expected after starting the season with just one win and six losses.

He said the victory was even more special because it came against a bigger school with a history of almost always defeating the Bison.

New Buffalo on the road lost to Buchanan by 14 points in late

December.

Tripp said his goal was to keep the Bucks under 30 points, which was nearly accomplished with a smothering, turnover causing defense from one end of the court to the other the entire game.

Tripp said he was also pleased with the shot selection and rebounding of his players who are mostly sophomores.

"I'm not surprised. Our guys are good. We're good," he said.

The Bison are now 7-7 after notching just two victories in what was a rebuilding season last year.

"My guys are ready. We've spend the last year and a half now grooming for this moment," he said.

Tripp and his coaching staff spent the off season on the court reinforcing the fundamentals of the game with the players.

There was also a lot of weight lifting and games during the summer.

New Buffalo was down 7-0 early in the game but came back mostly with short buckets from center Lucas Forker to take a six point lead into halftime.

The lead grew to 12 points mid-way through the third quarter with help from three point shots by Sam Tripp and Andres Becera.

The Bison still had a nine point lead with about four minutes left in the fourth quarter but it begin to evaporate when Matt Trigg driving to the rim scored

and sank a free throw from being fouled.

Quickly, he hit three more free throws when fouled again twice while shooting.

Junior M'Nason Smothers responded with a lay-up from a pass to give the Bison a five point lead with less than three minutes on the game clock.

Buchanan pulled back to within three points about 60 seconds later but could not get any closer due to the Bison defense along with buckets and free throws from James Shaw, Tripp, Becera and Nick Haskins.

New Buffalo was up by five points when sophomore Brysun

Perry blocked a desperation three point shot from Buchanan that wouldn't have mattered at the final buzzer.

The players and numerous fans from the student cheering section ran out to center court to celebrate.

The Bison held on despite losing Forker during much of the second half to foul trouble and senior Elliott Bourne coming out of the game in the second half because of a knee injury.

Fortunately, Tripp said the injury was not major and Bourne, a key figure in the team's success, could return without missing any games.

"He's a tough kid and I would never bet against him," he said.



Hikers to search for scat, tracks on joint hike with Chikaming Open Lands

The Harbor Country Hikers is teaming up with Chikaming Open Lands (COL) to sponsor a Saturday, Feb. 10, hike that will focus on identifying animals by their scat and tracks.

The hike begins at 9 a.m. at the Merritt Family and Younger Family Preserves in Union Pier. COL Education and Outreach Coordinator and Hikers member Grace Fredenburg will lead the hike.

The Merritt Family and Younger Family Preserves are contiguous COL properties that protect 60 acres of forest and wetland. Two different forest environments are in various stages of regrowth: a mesic, or moist,

southern forest and a southern hardwood swamp.

This hike is open to all, but space is limited and registration is required. To reserve space, contact Fredenburg at gball@chikamingopenlands.org. The hike is rated moderately physically difficult, and will cover about 1.5 miles. Those who attend are advised to dress in layers, wear a warm cap and sturdy shoes or boots and bring plenty of water.

For more information, including driving directions to the preserves, visit the Hikers' website, www.harborcountryhikers.com, or its Facebook page, Harbor Country Hikers. — STAFF REPORTS



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Ad
Council



Color guards Kaitlyn Rainwater and Luren Gradowski get students riled up at the pep rally



Bison face off against Covert Friday night



Students play a game of Knock Out at the pep rally



Seniors Lauren Gradowski and Ava Johnson accept the Spirit Jug at Friday's game



Bison boys face off against Covert at Friday's game



Students play Knock Out at Friday's pep rally



Bison face off against Covert at Friday's basketball team



Students cheer each other on at Friday's pep rally



Juniors compete against the sophomores at Thursday's volleyball game



Winterfest Kings Cameron Forker and Dre Becerra and Queen Laura Wamser



Seniors shout their graduation year at the pep rally

Bison celebrate Winterfest 2024

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Students at New Buffalo High School looked underneath a variety of locations, from under the bed to underwater, to find ways that best represented the theme for this year's Winterfest, which took place Monday through Friday, Jan. 23-26.

Students chose a theme to best represent this year's overall theme, which was "Under-Where? Spelled W-H-E-R-E." The following placed in the wall decorating contest: first place, the seniors and their "Under the Sea"- themed wall; second place, the freshmen and their "Monsters Under the Bed" wall; third place, the juniors and their "Under the Stars" wall and fourth place, the sophomores and their "Under the Weather" wall.

Students competed in intense competitions between classes during Spirit Week, during which they dressed in outfits to coordinate with each day's unique theme. The following were the results from Spirit Week: first place, seniors; second place, sophomores; third place, juniors and fourth place, freshmen.

The weeklong festivities culminated with Friday's game, when the Bison faced off against the Covert Bulldogs and seniors Dre Becerra and Cameron Forker were crowned Winerfest Kings and Laura Wamser was crowned Winterfest Queen. Also on the Winterfest Court were Elliott Bourne, Ava Johnson, Jack Lantz, John Riley, Gio Sanchez-Perez, Finn Siewart and Sam Wendel-Suppa. The following were student representatives: Harper Bowman, Layne Collins and Aiden Timm, freshmen; Colleen Chlystun, Kayden Hall and Henry Jakobsen, sophomores and Erick Gaeta, Ellen Ripley and Ava Totzke, juniors.



Juniors shout their graduation year at the pep rally



Students play a game of Knock Out at Friday's pep rally



The Bison mascot says goodbye to elementary students at the pep rally



Colorguards Lauren Gradowski and Kaitlyn Rainwater lead the band through the halls



Elementary school students are fired up at the pep rally



Sophomores celebrate a victory during Thursday's volleyball game



Members of the Winterfest Court await the crowning



The Bison cheering section at Friday's game



Students compete in a scooter relay at the pep rally



The high school band leads the way to the pep rally



Junior boys (in black) compete against seniors in the Winterfest volleyball game



Sophomores celebrate their volleyball victory



Miss Bridgman First Runner Up Ava Starbuck answers a question from Tim Taylor



Miss New Buffalo Audrey Proctor speaks during the pageant with other visiting royalty



Contestants open the show with a dance



Lauren Vegter crowns Amri Kuhn as Miss Spirit



Miss New Buffalo First Runner-up Kaitlyn Rainwater waves to the crowd



Contestants await the crowning



Miss Spirit 2023 Lauren Vegter (right) leads the opening number



Tim Taylor chats with Bud Princess and Prince Ellie Current and Rigger Kivela

Miss Baroda First Runner-up crowned Miss Spirit 2024

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

A member of the 2024 Baroda Royal Court took home the crown for the 11th annual Miss Spirit of Blossomtime Pageant.

Against a dark pink backdrop, Miss Baroda First Runner-up Amri Kuhn was crowned by Miss Spirit 2023 Lauren Vegter Saturday, Jan. 27, during the Valentine's Day-themed pageant at the St. Joseph High School Auditorium.

"Thank you to the judges for seeing this in me and seeing who I am and giving me this support - I really appreciate you - and my parents and my chair people that are my biggest supporters ...I couldn't have done this without them," Kuhn said.

A junior at Lakeshore High School, Kuhn participates in Key Club, where she volunteers at events such as blanket making, food drives and elementary school help. She's also part of the SADD Club, National Honor Society, vice president of the Environmental Club and is Lakeshore athletic photographer for all sports and events and photo editor on the yearbook. Someday, she'd like to attend a four-year college to pursue entrepreneurship.

To match her persevering spirit, Kuhn said her parents have given her a nickname: "Persie."

"I own a photography business and so really persevering through that and all the fun things that come along with that - just persevering is really my main thing that I focus on in life," she said.

As Miss Spirit, Kuhn plans to be a role model by persevering through all that comes with her new title

"A role model to me really means someone that's inspiring, someone that embodies a lot of characteristics and qualities that represent a leader and someone who perseveres through all the hard times," Kuhn said.

Kuhn was one of the top finalists,

which includes First Runner-up to Miss Bridgman Ava Starbuck, First Runner-up to Miss Coloma Brielle Hicks, First Runner-up to Miss Hartford Cessie Finley and First Runner-up to Miss Stevensville Taylor Davis.

All top five contestants were awarded \$200 scholarships.

The People's Choice Award, which involved contestants bringing a poster of themselves to display in the lobby before the competition, was awarded to First Runner-up to Miss Edwardsburg Kodi Jones.

The pageant was emceed by Tim Taylor.

The Miss Spirit of Blossomtime Pageant is open to all Blossomtime Communities' first runners up and offers one more lady an opportunity to enjoy the many events and activities her sister queens will participate in. This year, 20 young ladies from the following communities competed for the title of Miss Spirit 2024: Bangor, Baroda, New Buffalo, Three Oaks/River Valley, Hartford, Coloma, Niles, Bridgman, South Haven, St. Joseph, Benton Harbor, Edwardsburg, Eau Claire/Sodus, Berrien Springs, Bloomingdale, Watervliet, Buchanan, Cassopolis, Stevensville and Lawrence.

Kuhn will go on to compete in the Showcase of Queens/ Mr. Blossomtime Pageant Sunday, April 14, where she'll be eligible to win all the queen awards. She will also be eligible for all awards and titles, including the title of Miss Blossomtime, at the Miss Blossomtime Pageant Monday, April 15, at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center in Benton Harbor.



Miss Three Oaks First Runner-up
Lily Morse describes a role model



Miss Baroda First Runner-up
Amri Kuhn graces the stage



Contestants strike a pose with (center) Miss Spirit 2023 Lauren Vegter



Miss New Buffalo First Runner-up
Kaitlyn Rainwater gives her description
of a role model



Miss Three Oaks and River Valley First
Runner-up Lily Morse takes the stage



Miss New Buffalo First Runner-up
Kaitlyn Rainwater graces the stage

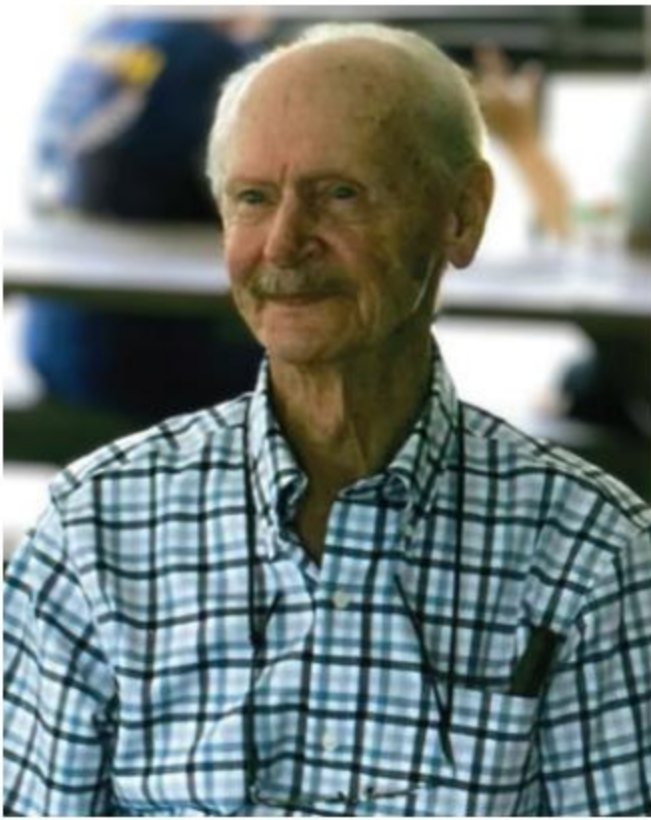


Miss Bridgman First Runner-up
Ava Starbuck takes the stage



Members of the Mr. royalty take the stage

OBITUARIES



**Charles
Condon
Zabel, Sr.**
1933-2024

Charles Condon Zabel, Sr., 90, of Three Oaks, died, Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

His life began September 26, 1933 in LaPorte, Indiana, the seventh of eight children born to George and Bernice Zabel. He married Ruth Ann Warren, July 17, 1954 in Three Oaks, Michigan.

Chuck's whole life was his wife Ruth Ann and his family. He enjoyed going to all sporting events that his children and grandchildren were in. He had successful businesses in Three Oaks for sixty-five years, from gas stations to auto repair. Chuck enjoyed his community and had many meaningful conversations at the round table over coffee and homemade cookies made by Ruth Ann. Chuck was known for his ever-present cigar.

Chuck will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is

survived by his beloved wife of sixty-nine years, Ruth Ann Zabel of Three Oaks; one daughter, Sheri (Vern) Watkins of Three Oaks; three sons, Terry (Linda) Zabel of Grand Rapids, Chuck (Tammy) Zabel of Three Oaks, Denny (Valerie) Zabel of Three Oaks; ten grandchildren, Crystal, Kirsten, Tony, Keith, Kevin, Melissa, Jan, Quinn, Chelsea, and Nicole; fifteen great grandchildren, Ava, Rowan, Brody, Reese, Louisa, Carter, Gracie, Dylan, Jacob, Ingrid, Augie, Austin, Linden, Lucas, Gretta; one brother, Don (Mindy) Zabel of Florida and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one sister, Dorothy (Mick) Rosenbaum; five brothers, George "Junior", Tom, Jim, Bob, and Dick.

The family will hold a celebration of life at Watkins Park, 3 West Locust Street, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128 on Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Chuck be made to Three Oaks Baseball Association, Post Office Box 104 Three Oaks, Michigan 49128.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

Goldberry Woods to offer special Valentines Day experience

Join Goldberry Woods in The Barn for a guided experience of Marma Chikitsa (Ayurvedic Acupressure) and Abhyanga (Ayurvedic Self-Oil Massage) from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Goldberry Woods' newest team member, Ferris McQuade, will invite you to treat yourself, or bring a partner or a friend, for a loving, authentic and restorative self-touch experience. A yoga instructor, herbalist and student of the Science of Life (Ayurveda), McQuade completed her ShambhavAnanda Yoga® 200-hour training at Chi-Town Shakti Yoga + Meditation in 2013 and has additional certifications in Meditation and Prenatal Yoga. She has been studying Herbalism and Ayurveda, with a specific focus in the practice of Marma Chikitsa.

According to McQuade, the experience will gently open the joints and move fascia, the connective tissue that governs the nervous system. Acupressure and self-oil massage practices help clear the energetic channels of the body and build the connections between mind, body and spirit. More specifically, McQuade said that Marma and Abhyanga are Ayurvedic practices that support the

nervous system and bring in Earth and Water elements. In Ayurveda, winter is Vata Dosha season, which is ruled by Air and Ether elements, so it is especially supportive in winter to balance the Vata Dosha with Earth and Water elements.

To prepare for the experience, dress in layered activewear, including shorts and a T-shirt/tank for self-oil massage. Sesame seed oil will be provided; however, you are welcome to bring your own body oil. Yoga mats and equipment will be provided; however, feel free to bring your own mat.

The week of Feb. 14, guests will receive a bottle of oil and link to a video tutorial to have their own experience of Abhyanga. Add your favorite essential oils to make this gift all your own. Sesame Seed oil is a neutral oil, neither heating or cooling, so it is suitable for any constitution.

The cost is \$54 per person (no charge to guests of Goldberry Woods) Reservations can be made at www.ombralunare.com/event-details-registration/marma-at-goldberry-woods.

The Barn at Goldberry Woods, is located at 9902 Community Hall Road in Union Pier. — STAFF REPORTS

Charges in table leg assault

BY STAN MADDUX

Charges have been filed in connection with a Michigan City man having some of his teeth knocked out with the leg from a table.

James Cobb, 45, of Michigan City is charged in La Porte Superior Court 1 with Level 5 felony battery.

According to court documents, the victim on January 8 was hosting a gathering at his home at Tall Timbers Apartments at 3141 Springland Ave. on the city's far east side.

Police said he told investigators everyone was having a good time until he went outside and confronted a female about stealing something from his home.

They were arguing when Cobbs apparently removed the leg from a table and went outside, striking the victim in the mouth

with the hard wooden object, according to court documents,

The victim ran inside while Cobb left with the female, police said.

Police said the man was missing teeth from the top and bottom of his gums and also had a swollen upper lip.

He refused medical attention. Initially, police said the victim was not going to pursue charges but decided to after learning Cobb had been boasting about the incident.

The victim quickly identified the suspect in a photo line-up, police said.

Cobb could face anywhere from a one to six year sentence.

HOROSCOPE

FEBRUARY 1-7, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19



There is some very restless energy coming your way this week and it may feel like you have to make decisions quickly, or without time

to double check details. This is a good time to reach out to a friend. Before you do anything, a quick message could get you all the info you need to succeed.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20



There is a very unpredictable nature to the week ahead and it would be wise not to get too attached to schedules or itineraries.

Be prepared to take the alternative and look for any unusual stops along the way. You just may find that you have made a new best friend, along the way.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21



If relationships with authority figures start to feel a little uncertain or unstable, fall back on your ability to read situations

and people quickly. Being the King of unpredictability, you know when not to follow what everyone else does. Avoid blending in and let your actions speak for themselves.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22



Move beyond traditional setups and start doing things differently with partners and friends. Let go of controlling

the situation, the itinerary and topics of conversation. Go with the flow of each situation as it happens. Avoid overplanning and embrace spontaneity.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22



People may not come through as anticipated this week, causing you to have to make some quick moves to cover what may not get

accomplished in their absence. Fear not, the planets are in position to provide you with the energy and foresight needed to accomplish anything successfully.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22



You will have somewhat of a restless hearth this week. Be wise and don't make any rash decisions unless, it's which box of chocolates to buy from

Fanny Mae. Sometimes outside options only shine when you can't have them. Be sure you don't gamble a good thing for the sparkly illusion.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22



You will be ready to make some colorful changes at home this week. This is the time to embrace bold colors and unique textiles.

Put more effort into creating a space that reflects your own personal style and taste. Don't worry about what the public sphere think's because it's your private space.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21



This is the time to put your heart on your sleeve and let people know how you really feel about situations; more than just setting boundaries or

being tough, really go deep and get to the root of your fears and apprehensions. When you see the root cause of insecurities, your actions will be more authentic.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21



There will be a lot happening on the home-front this week. This is the time to find the perfect deals and steals for Le chateau d' Archer.

It's important to communicate more so, if you don't see what you are looking for take the time to ask around. Networking will uncover a lot of hidden gems.

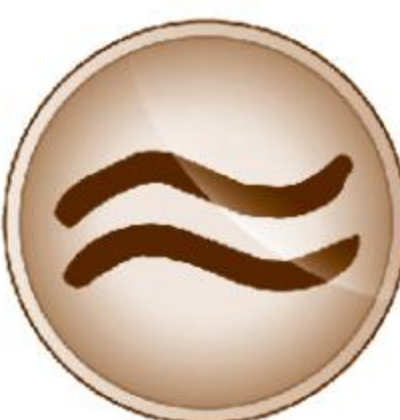
CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19



There is some very chaotic energy flowing in now and this may not be the time to act impulsively. Guard against making any permanent

or drastic changes this week. Focus this energy on communicating and getting all available options out in the open then, make an informed decision quickly.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



It will be easy to get caught up in your head this week and overthink financial responsibilities or big-ticket purchases.

The best way to handle this is to rely on your inner strength of detaching. Pull back and reflect on the emotional component of the situation, then handle the budget.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20



Get the party started. Your social sector is getting a big boost now and you would be wise to get off the couch and get out there! If you are

currently in a relationship, the tow of you should go out more. Plan a date night. If you are single, get more involved with friends and family.

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

			1					9
	2			6				
				8			1	
	6		7		8	2		
8	7		4		1			
	5							
5					6			9
	8	2			9	5		4
			2			7		

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Queen of the fairies
4 Salt
8 Semitic deity
12 Tumor (suf.)
13 Father: Hebrew
14 Discharge
15 Deter (2 words)
17 Ointment
18 Bay window
19 Eur. Economic Community (abbr.)
21 Band
24 Dancer/choreographer
28 Chin. character (longevity)
31 Argyll island
33 Brief life story
34 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
35 Average
36 Gelderland city
37 Adjective-forming (suf.)

- 38 Spiders' nests
39 Same (Lat.)
40 Horse
42 Irish exclamation
44 Group of whales
46 Land of Croesus
50 Luminary
53 Aloeswood
56 Sample tape
57 Leaf division
58 Oriental tea
59 Irish writing
60 Deserve
61 Cry

DOWN

- 1 Honey-eater bird
2 Cupid
3 E. Indies island
4 Ancient stringed instrument
5 Amer. Bar Assn. (abbr.)
6 Television channel
7 Body of water
8 Pew
9 Church vessel
10 State
11 Limited (abbr.)
16 S.A. rodent

- 20 And other: abbr. (2 words) (Lat.)
22 Unless, in law
23 Cheese
25 Sleeping
26 Journey
27 Verse
28 Ancient Egypt. city
29 Old-style verb
30 Us dam
32 Freshwater worm
35 Erase
39 Pastoral poem
41 Computer chip
43 Amer. patriot
45 Ravine
47 Physicians, for short
48 Ginkgo tree
49 Melville's captain
50 Carriage
51 Two-year-old sheep
52 Amer. Medical Assn. (abbr.)
54 Port. colony in India
55 Abridged (abbr.)

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56					57					58		
59					60					61		

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop. — Confucius



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Courtyard Gallery to host Frank Kurland

The Courtyard Gallery will begin its 35th year by hosting a reception for contemporary landscape artist Frank Kurland from 1-5 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 3.

Kurland began his career as a graphic designer and in marketing. He started his new career as an artist when he moved to northern Indiana.

The inspiration for his paintings is the natural surroundings of fields, trees and open skies and how the light reflects upon them.

This will be the gallery's first event for the year, with many more to follow.

Courtyard Gallery is located at 813 E. Buffalo Street (U.S. 12) in New Buffalo.

For more information call 269-469-4110. — STAFF REPORTS

SERVICE DIRECTORY

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NO BULLYING SCHOOLS PRESENTATION



- *Where: New Buffalo Middle/High School Cafeteria*
- *When: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. Following the NBAS Empty Bowls event.*
- *Tom Thelen (more info below)*

WHO IS TOM THELEN??



- *Speaker at 800+ schools since 2012*
- *Lead Author of Mental Health 101*
- *Founder of Nonprofit, Reset Schools*
- *Certified Trainer in "Mental Health First Aid," a program from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing*
- *Lives in Cocoa, Florida, with his wife Casie, four kids, and a dog.*

Tom Thelen is one of America's top motivational speakers on the topics of mental health and bullying prevention. His new book, *Mental Health 101 for Teens*, is an Amazon #1 Release.

Tom has spoken at over 800 schools and conferences and has been interviewed on NBC, CBS, FOX, and PBS. Tom is a Certified Instructor in Youth Mental Health First Aid, a training program by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

As the founder of the nonprofit [RESETSCHOOLS.ORG](https://resetschools.org) Tom and his team created the award-winning Mental Health 101 Book and Curriculum, a program that teaches students positive skills like respect, responsibility, and resiliency, as well as coping skills for stress and anxiety.

Tom is the founder of [NOBULLYINGSCHOOLS.COM](https://nobullyingschools.com) an evidence-based bullying prevention program with a smartphone app and video lessons on the topics of bullying, mental health, social skills, and resiliency.

Tom graduated from Grace University with a Bachelor of Science degree and went on to write three books for students including *Teen Leadership Revolution*, *Victimproof*, and *Mental Health 101 for Teens*.

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Sawyer Dance Academy spotlighted at The Acorn

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Dancers at Sawyer Dance Academy range from being age 3 to over 80.

Director Deb Knuth said that Pat Bryant, who founded the academy in 1982 as The Pat Bryant School of Dance in Harbert, remains devoted to her craft.

“She still comes and dances,” she said.

Audience members saw dancers who were a variety of ages as well as who had a wide range of skills during the academy performance at The Acorn Center for the Performing Arts Sunday, Jan. 28.

The performance was part of The Acorn’s second annual winter dance showcase, Isabella Schmidt, an instructor at the academy and box office and administrator coordinator at The Acorn, said.

This year, the showcase has grown to include eight local dance studios.

Having been a dancer herself since she was 2 years old, Schmidt said that she conceived the idea to bring the dancers to The Acorn’s Turner Stage.

“In the fall of 2022, Nicki (Gauthier), our artistic director, came up to me and said, ‘You’re a dancer, how can we bring

dance to The Acorn?’” she said.

While growing up in Sawyer, Schmidt attended Sawyer Dance Academy. She studied dance and arts management at Oklahoma City University before returning to Michigan and becoming a teacher here.

Dance offers Schmidt a way to reveal her inner feelings - without having to say anything.

“I don’t like expressing myself vocally - talking on stage gives me lots of anxiety - but dancing, it just feels good, it feels better and I think our dancers feel that way too,” she said.

Deb said that dance instills in the students myriad of life lessons.

“It teaches them a lot of discipline, it teaches them a lot of responsibility and friendships grow from this,” she said.

The academy has 140 students, including 21 in the Sawyer Dance Troupe, from across Berrien County.

“So they’re meeting kids from different schools - which is really great, that they bond and have great friendships from that,” Deb, who earned her BFA in dance from Western Michigan University, said.

Members of the community can see these benefits and more when they attend the showcases.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for the kids and the community to see what kind of artistic things that we do around here - the kids work really hard and it’s a good performance opportunity for them,” she said.

Per its website, the Sawyer Dance Troupe is a competition dance team that boasts multiple high awards from various competitions across the nation.

Upcoming performances for the dancers include the Masquerade Competition in Elgin, Illinois, in two weeks and the Platinum Dance Competition in May. In July, they’ll do the Nationals in Wisconsin.

Upcoming dance showcase performances are (all performances are at 3 p.m.) Fusion Center for Dance Sunday, Feb 4; Dance Arts + Diamond Academy Sunday, Feb. 18 and Citadel Dance and Music Center Sunday, Feb. 25. Tickets can be purchased at www.acornlive.com.



All the dancers close out the show with a closing number



The younger set showcases their dancing skills



Dancers at Sawyer Dance Academy showcase their skills on stage



Dancers open the performance with a basketball-themed dance



Dancers’ skills were on full display at The Acorn



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May Erlewine
SAT 2/3 8 P.M. ET

A Valentine's Open Mic Night
feat. Kelly Hoppenjans
FRI 2/9 7 P.M. ET

The Chicago Experience
SAT 2/10 8 P.M. ET

Davy Knowles
w/ Jack Whittle Trio
FRI 2/16 8 P.M. ET

Second Hand News
A Tribute To Fleetwood Mac
SAT 2/17 8 P.M. ET



Find more events at

acornlive.org



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